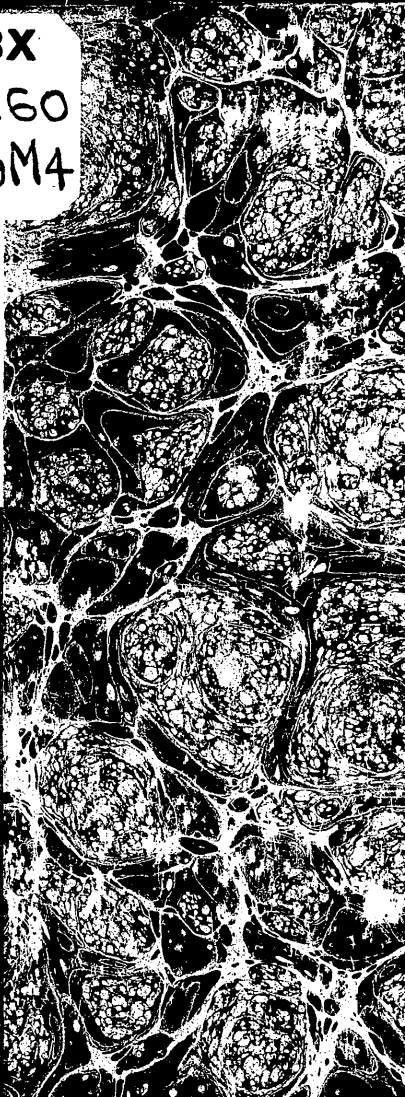
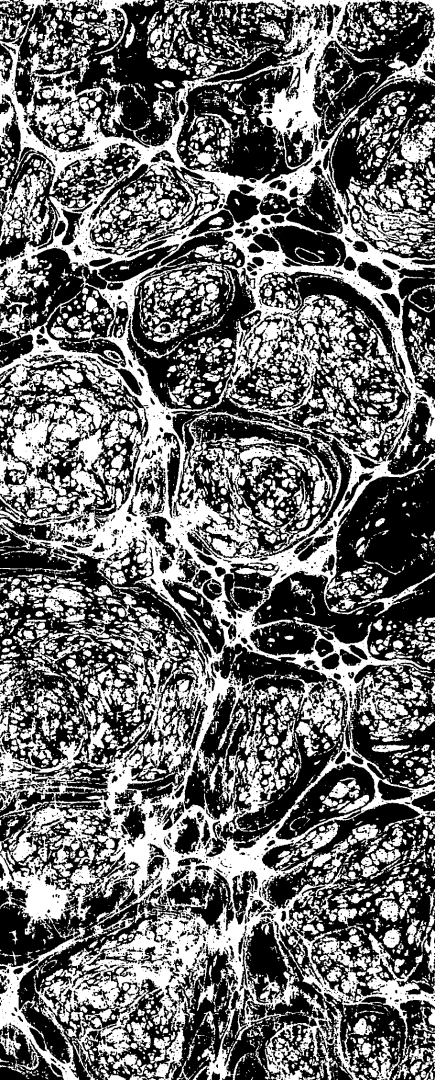


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EDWARD CHIPMAN GUILD.

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BORN 29 FEBRUARY, 1832.

DIED 6 NOVEMBER, 1899.

“He Being Dead yet Speaketh.”

A SERMON

Preached 19 November, 1899,

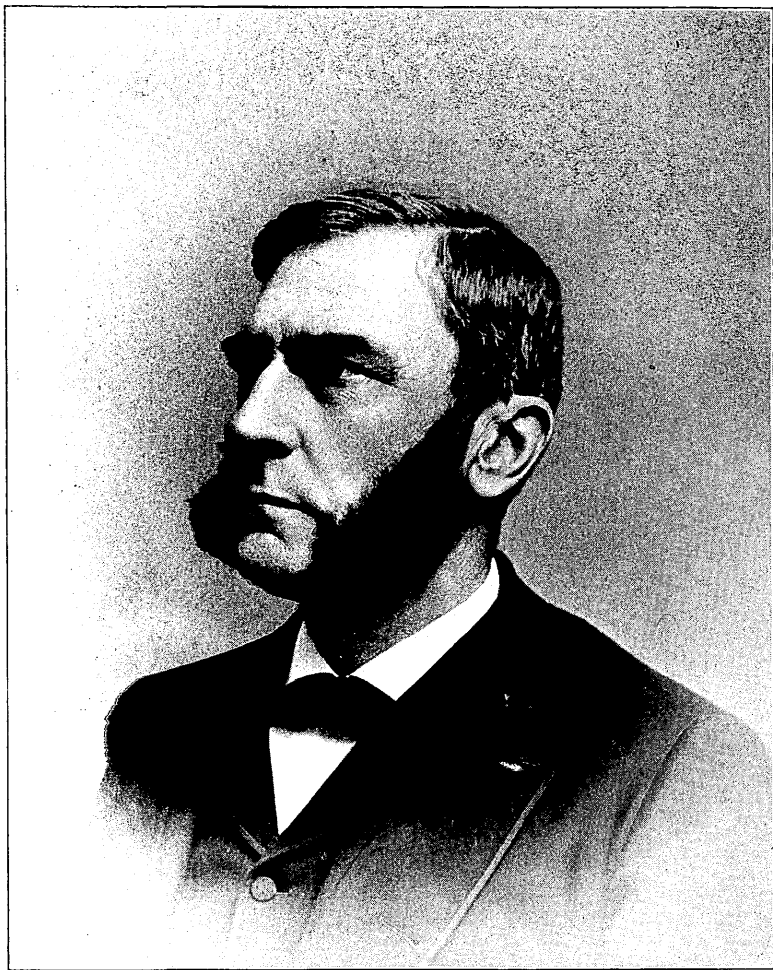
BY

EDWARD BEECHER MASON,

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BRUNSWICK, MAINE:

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TO THE
HONORABLE
MEMBERS OF THE
LEGISLATURE

OF THE STATE OF
MASSACHUSETTS

IN SENATE,
JANUARY 1, 1899.

PORTLAND, ME.:
SMITH & SALE, PRINTERS,
1899.

Bowdoin College Library, which had an appreciative patron and a constant benefactor in Reverend Edward C. Guild, prints for the use of his friends the words publicly spoken in his memory at Brunswick. The tribute that would please him best,—the remembrance of his thoughtful and unselfish services, the recollection of literary and spiritual aspirations quickened by his life and thoughts,—can not be recorded in black and white.



EDWARD CHIPMAN GUILD.

"He being dead yet speaketh." Heb. xi : 4.

PERHAPS the strongest and most beneficent influence in this world, which does more than all others to make it a habitable world where we can live happily, is that of a good and true man who was faithful unto death. Some times this influence lives on among men who know it not, and comes from persons whose names have never been written or spoken as benefactors of their race. The power and blessing of a good life is not lost to the world because it does not come down labelled as emanating from a certain source, but mingles unnoticed with the great stream of being. In a mighty river on which ships ride safely, carrying the commerce of wealthy cities, there is water from different streams, and creeks, and mountain brooks, flowing together in one broad, deep current; but what water comes from this stream, and what from that, no human wisdom can tell. So in the current of human life, as separated into races, nations, and neighborhoods, there are silent contributions from one soul and another, which will never be distinguished and rewarded till the secrets of all hearts are disclosed. It is delightful to think that each man who has lived a good, true life and gone his way, unnoticed and unknown, still leaves behind him in the world some goodness and power.

In many instances, however, we do know whence certain blessings and beautiful influences have come to us that made our lives happier and stronger than they would otherwise

have been. We can trace the influences back to their source in a certain life, lived by one whose name we revere and whose memory we keep forever green. Such a name is in our minds to-day. He being dead yet speaks to us in thoughts once kindled by his kindly presence, in emotions and preferences for which to some extent we are indebted to his power. Impressions made on our minds long years ago abide and show themselves to-day, and when they do we are conscious of another soul, and of a fragrance shed forth from that soul.

There is nothing in the world more strange and sacred than the way in which one human spirit mingles with another spirit by its sympathies and antipathies, and seems, as it were, to leave behind in that spirit a suggestion of itself to speak through other lips and shine in other actions. Such a man, long after death, still lives, acts and speaks in the persons on whom he once exerted influence. The memory of how he talked on a certain subject, or looked on a certain occasion, or acted in some special trial, will abide with us, and come back to us, and live over again in us, till we hardly seem at times to be ourselves; and this memory is the speaking of that man who once lived and is dead and is alive for evermore.

One reason why this personal influence may be regarded as the best and greatest in the world is that it depends on no circumstance or condition. That man who founds a college, endows a charitable institution, or builds a church, affects our lives and becomes an influence for good in the world; but another man who founds no college, endows no charitable institution, builds no church, yet affects our lives most powerfully, pours through them the peace, joy and sunshine of his own nature. The legacy which he leaves

behind is not that of an institution, either educational, philanthropic or religious, but it is the permanent, imperishable power of a lofty and consecrated human life. It would at first reasonably be supposed that the mightiest and most enduring influence over mankind is that which goes forth from the granite walls of university buildings or from hospitals and asylums for the relief of human misery, but it will be found that true, loving, loyal human hearts are more powerful, pervasive and lasting than stone, and continue to inspire and bless mankind long after granite walls have crumbled into dust. There is always one supreme and conclusive instance in Jesus, who left behind him no memorial whatever, who founded no school, wrote no book, letter or line so far as we know, organized no society save the loose fellowship of his disciples, and yet has done more than all colleges and establishments for the regeneration of our race.

It is true that in ordinary cases the name of such a good man, who has lived, labored and suffered in any community, will be forgotten after a few generations, or remembered only as a tradition. The dark, eager, strong, but kindly face, once familiar to every child, will pass wholly from recollection, or rather, will never have been seen at all; but the power of that life has not been lost, or even diminished; for it has simply disappeared as a river in the sea, and entered into combination with innumerable lives, making them better and nobler, without their knowing whence or how the influence came. As the forests which waved on this continent centuries ago, making it a shelter and hunting ground for savages, have fallen and decayed only to enrich the earth from which they sprang, and to reappear in the growth of later vegetation, so the good men of former times,

whose very names are forgotten, whose faces are unknown to us, have disappeared only because all that was good, strong and noble in them has merged itself in our lives and in the lives of other living men. Such men "departing leave behind them" something more and better than "footprints on the sands of time"; they leave emanations from their own souls, aspirations breathed out into the world, which can never die, suggestions dropped like seeds into other souls, which spring up and bear immortal fruit. These emanations, unlike heat radiated from the sun, do not diminish the volume or power of the original source. The good influence which a man leaves behind him deducts nothing from the man himself, does not lessen his own love or life or heavenly aspiration when he joyfully enters upon the larger existence beyond, but rather, on the other hand, swells the volume of his life, enlarges his love, and expands his whole spiritual nature. Love grows rich by giving itself away, and when a man who has, as it were, brooded over an entire community, sacrificed himself for that community, considered its wants, gone about supplying those wants, carrying books where they were needed, directing minds in the way of truth and beauty,—when such an one goes away into the unknown beyond, he does not go impoverished by such benefactions. His is the wealth that increases through distribution. The more it is given away, the more it abides at home.

The influence, therefore, which comes from good men who have lived among us, and left behind the fragrance of their lives, does not depend in the smallest degree upon time or tide; upon place or circumstance; upon wealth or poverty; upon colleges, or churches, or chapels, or libraries; although all these instrumentalities may be used in the

human service ; but it depends only and always upon itself, and upon what it is in itself. The great gift of such a man, who yet speaks, is neither church nor institution, but simply himself. He still lives and speaks in his own proper personality. Some men seem great and good because they are framed in great and good circumstance, because they occupy some important and honorable position, fill a prominent pulpit, or belong to a famous university, and so are set up on a pedestal ; but others—and we know such a man—seem great and good, almost august and venerable, though standing quite alone, unattended and undecorated with any of the glittering orders which this world has to confer ; men without retinue or establishment, who come and go, here and there, doing quiet deeds and speaking helpful words ; and these are the men who are great in themselves, good in their own right, and who continue speaking long after colleges and churches are silent, in the night of their own strong, true, pure personality. The spirit of such a man after he is gone touches our own spirits, not mediately through manners and customs, through rites and ceremonies, through educational exercises and religious worship, but directly, immediately, soul to soul and spirit to spirit, in the same way in which God touches all souls. We recall instances of his thoughtfulness ; we remember how wisely and kindly he chose means for ends ; how he tended this or that drooping plant ; dropped this or that seed ; selected this or that book as suited to the needs of one or another friend ; served the village improvement society ; worked for the historical association ; gave wise counsel and aid to the town library ; assisted young women's clubs in their literary studies ; and in other unknown ways so lived as to be still living and speaking. This influence I believe to be the

strongest, kindest and grandest influence which can be exerted by one man over another.

This greatest and best influence culminates, or is completed, in death. So long as a man lives, so long as he has wit in his brain and love in his heart, we know not what more and better he is capable of doing. Life rises higher and higher, and expresses itself more and more strongly and sweetly, but it is only at the last—in a perfectly regulated life—that it comes to completion. We need to wait till the end,—till the last act in the drama, when the final word is spoken and the curtain is about to drop—before we form an opinion. No judgment can pass upon a human life, no estimate can be given of the deeds done in the body till all is over, and even then we must often wait for time to remove us far enough away before we can say how good, or great, or grand that life really was. An artist works for weeks or months over his canvas, adding here and there, touching and retouching, while it stands on the easel; but all seems to an untrained eye obscure and confused, till one day he gives a few strokes with his brush and it springs instantly into life and meaning! The picture is unveiled. So life is unveiled by death.

We fear to have our friends go away from us, and can hardly bear to think how lonely and different it will be when they are no longer in the world; the future, without them, is looked forward to as a blank, devoid of all that is beautiful and blessed. Time, however, always tells a different story; and as the days go by we learn that our friends were never so much with us, never so closely by our sides and in our hearts, never so dear and intimate, seeming to mingle with our being and penetrate our spirits as when they are absent from the body. As in that beautiful sonnet of

Blanco White's, in which he tells us that he thought "mysterious night" would come and blot out "this lovely frame, this glorious canopy of light and blue," yet when it came, "Lo, creation widened in man's view;" so it is in life, for who would think such darkness lay concealed in light, such ignorance and blindness concerning great qualities, which only reveal themselves in death.

It was the death of Christ which disclosed to His disciples the grandeur of that companion with whom they had been spending their days and nights. While He was yet with them they contended, murmured and complained of His words, that they were hard sayings; but when He was gone their hearts burned, and it came over them as a revelation, that He was the Son of God. He said to them, "It is expedient for you that I go away." It was a part of their training; it was a method of bringing His character to bear on them with the most beneficent results. Had He remained they would have misunderstood Him longer; they would have continued to think of a Jewish dominion, wide as the world, throwing down Roman empire and oppression; they would have been held captive in the narrow national thought about themselves and their fathers; but death broke the spell, widened the world, and they learned how all men everywhere were to receive the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. So we cling to our friends, hug them close, and see only in part, often seeing only the poorer part, the more earthly part, getting, as it were, in our own light and standing in our own way, till death snaps the tie and breaks in on our dreams, giving us in their place, greater and more glorious realities.

While our friends are with us we get used to them, we almost become weary of seeing them as they go about; their

voices sound familiar and common, their faults stand out and their virtues lie concealed; we weary of their presence and must needs go on a journey for a little relaxation. There is great truth contained in the instinct which leads certain nations to deify and worship their dead ancestors. The Catholic Church is wise and right in canonizing her saints and putting a halo around brows that were unnoticed or even despised while here in the flesh. We do not recognize our heroes till they are gone, and sometimes make the strangest mistakes in our estimates of the living.

He who being dead yet speaks to us, speaks perhaps in more thrilling tones than came through the flesh, he who still holds his place, still instructs and helps us with his spirit, still compels admiration, commands with a loftier authority and wins with a sweeter attraction; the friend who does this after he is gone, and perhaps accomplishes more in his death than in all his life,—this friend whose name we know may safely be canonized as one of the saints whose influence continues to bless mankind in the world in which he has lived. This influence remains with us a benediction, an imperishable possession which the world can neither give nor take away; and it remains with us to help and comfort, often to inspire with sudden resolution and courage; it remains with us as a lofty, beautiful ideal, going on before and shining back upon us with a serene and heavenly light. Of such an one whose influence abides strong and good like a precious ointment shed forth, a grateful perfume filling the world with its fragrance, a secret strength enabling us to go many days—of such an one we may truly say, “He being dead yet speaketh.”

At a meeting of the Pejepscot Historical Society held November 16, 1899, it was voted that the following minute be entered upon its records :

"The Pejepscot Historical Society has learned with sorrow of the death on November sixth, of the Rev. Edward C. Guild, a former associate and a constant friend of the Society. During his residence in Brunswick he was an active and generous supporter of its interests, giving freely of his time and thought to promote its prosperity, and to make it an esteemed and beneficent influence in the community. In doing this he was only adding another to the many services, prompted by his helpful and unselfish spirit, which won for him the affection of his friends, and the profound respect and gratitude of the entire community. The Society desires to place on record its sense of the great loss sustained in his death, which may serve also as a slight expression of the regard which was felt for him during his life, and of the grateful remembrance in which he is held."



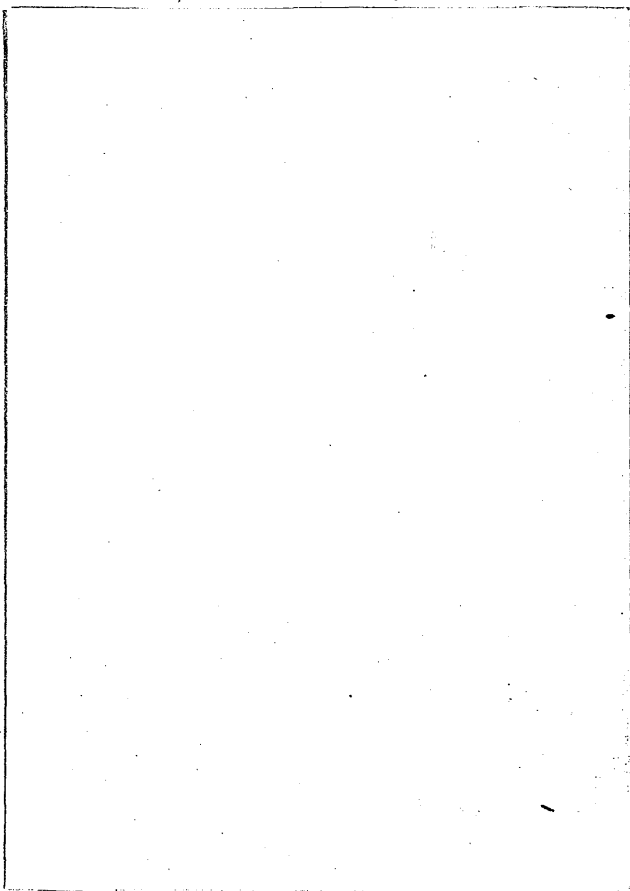
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